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ABSTRACT

This study sought to find out the nature of the professional influence that Nigerian cooperating teachers exert on student teachers. The interactions of four elementary school teachers and eight students who taught in their classes were closely observed, and the students' formal and informal interactions with these teachers were documented. In describing the dynamic events in student teaching, participant observation and interviews as well as questionnaires were used. Questionnaires were developed from the data generated from the observations. Respondents to questionnaires included 340 student teachers, 300 cooperating teachers, and 120 college tutors with whom the student teachers had close contact. The impression stated by some researchers and writers that Nigerian cooperating teachers have a somewhat negative role was, to a degree, substantiated. All of the student teachers interviewed said that they expected more help from the class teachers than they received, and that they got more help from the college tutors than from the class teachers. It is indicated in this study that cooperating teachers are not incorporated sufficiently into the official plan of student teaching. Recommendations are made for improving the quality of interaction between student teachers and their cooperating teachers. (JD)

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THE ROLE OF COOPERATING TEACHERS IN THE
PROFESSIONAL SOCIALIZATION OF STUDENT TEACHERS.

BY

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THE ROLE OF COOPERATING TEACHERS IN THE PROFESIONAL SOCIALIZATION OF STUDENT TEACHERS

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of socialization is the transmission of the culture of a society to its new members, whether they are young in years or adults learning a new role. Student teaching has been described as a process of socialization. It is generally considered the most important phase of a teacher's professional preparation. It is a time for the student teacher to explore, experiment, and "put it all together" before becoming a professional (Diamonti, 1977; Karmos and Jack, 1977; McAteer, 1976; Cogan, 1975).

Researchers have identified many groups of people who are influential in the professional socialization of student teachers. Some of these people are: the College Supervisor, the classroom (cooperating) teacher, the peers and the pupils (Haberman, 1971; Lacey, 1976).

The central theme of the literature on the cooperating teachers' role in socializing student teachers is that the student teachers "emulate both the good and bad points of the supervising teacher who is their assigned model." (Rubin, 1975 p. 35).

Cooperating teachers have been found to exert considerable influence on the student teachers' attitudes and teaching behaviours. Zeichner (1978, p. 28-29) reviewed some studies

on the influence of cooperating teachers and noted that the results of the studies are highly consistent. They reveal that:

1. Student teachers seemed to be acquiring many classroom practices of their cooperating teachers.
2. In their own classroom the following year, student teachers utilized the same methods and materials as used by their cooperating teacher.
3. Student teachers' attitudes changed to the direction of those held by their cooperating teachers (Rice, 1961ⁿ, Yee, 1967, 1969).
4. Student teachers moved towards the position of their cooperating teachers on a scale of dogmatism by the end of the experience (Johnson, 1969).
5. Student teachers saw their cooperating teachers as having the most significant influence on their experience (Karmos and Jacko, 1977).

It seems evident that cooperating teachers exert tremendous influence on student teachers. But how helpful are these influences? This study seeks to find out the nature of professional influence Nigerian cooperating teachers exert on student teachers.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

An acceptable view of socialization should see it as a humane process. Like all humane processes some amount of flexibility is essential. Student teachers should not be mistaken for inanimate things that could be taken and fitted

into an existing social structure. Socialization occurs in an open social world, not a closed system.

Unfortunately the traditional view of socialization stresses the notion that socialization fits the individual into the society. It assigns a missionary role to the socializers and that is to turn the unskilled novice into a 'finished product' who is capable of performing the sophisticated and 'civilized' role of the professional. The new individual is fitted into an already existing body of knowledge in the field. There is a high degree of determinism. The individual does not have much choice.

Teacher education institutions specify the goals they expect their students to accomplish. Most of these institutional goals do not see student teaching as an end in itself, but a contributor to all the aims of teacher education. Teacher educators are becoming increasingly aware of the vagueness of some institutional goals and the goals' apparent irrelevance to life in institutions. Presently there is a dominant trend toward performance (or competence) based teacher education - PBTE.

Competency-based teacher education goals emphasize the 'competencies' that a teacher must possess to be a successful educator. It is through a series of clinical experiences that the future teachers are able to demonstrate that they have acquired the competencies.

The notion of competence stresses the end product, the

person as the person is after socialization, rather than the formative process itself (Inleles, 1968 p. 50). PBTE may be useful in acquiring specific skills but teaching cannot be atomized into minute skills. Life in a classroom consists of complex sets of decision-making processes (Jackson, 1968).

Waldrop (1977) defined "behavioral degrees of freedom," as the number of action alternatives available to an individual from which to choose a course of action in a decision-making situation. He then attempted to determine which two methods of teacher preparation, competency-based and non-competency-based, was more effective in increasing the teacher's behavioral degrees of freedom. He administered rating scales to graduates and students of both programmes. He found that teachers who were educated in non-competency-based teacher education programmes demonstrated more behavioral degrees of freedom than teachers who were educated in competency-based teacher education programmes.

An underlying assumption of the conventional, traditional linear model of socialization is that the participants are engaged in purposeful interaction. They act for a particular end. Hall (1977 p. 71-83) questions this assumption that all participants in an organization work toward a goal. He distinguished between "official" and "operative" goals. Official goals are the "general purposes of the organization as put forth in the charter, annual reports, public statements

by key executive and other authoritative pronouncements." Operative goals, on the other hand, "designate the ends sought through the actual operating policies of the organization; they tell us what the organization actually is trying to do, regardless of what the official goals say are its aims." (p. 72). Operative goals are tied more directly to group interests.

It could be that the official goals of practice teaching are different from what the participants in the programme construe as the operative goals. Sorenson (1967 p. 249) asked 163 USA secondary school teachers to provide advice that would enable their "best friend" to obtain an "A" grade from their cooperating teachers. Sorenson analyzed the list and concluded, among other things, that: "the entire emphasis (of practice teaching) seems to be on the learning of routines for getting through the day rather than on the analysis of the reasons for the effectiveness of these routines."

Another set of findings that raise doubts about the functional model's assumption that socialization is purposive achieving specified goals, is that student teachers tend to shift toward the prevailing ethos of the elementary (practice) school (Fuller and Brown, 1975; Popkewitz, 1976; Tabachnick, 1980).

Bush and Denemark (1975 p. 292) observed that in addition

to the college-based programme of teacher education, there is a hidden "teacher education programme" in the schools composed of the powerful socializing forces which bombard beginning teachers. "The education of beginning teachers thus has two parts: one located in the colleges and the other located in the schools."

The different assumptions about socialization have the following implications for understanding the professional socialization of student teachers during teaching practice:

ASSUMPTIONS

- (1) The purpose of socialization is the comprehensive and consistent induction of an individual into the culture of a society, or sectors of it.
- (2) Interactions are deterministic and purposive.
- (3) The participants are both recipients and creators of norms and values. Incumbents are not fitted into existing structural frames.
- (4) There is considerable amount of flexibility during the socialization process.

IMPLICATIONS

- (1) The purpose of teaching practice should be the induction of students into the culture of teaching - knowledge, skills, values, attitudes and beliefs.
- (2) Setting some goals may be useful, but teaching cannot be atomized into minute skills. Life in a classroom consists of complex sets of decision-making processes.
- (3) Student teachers are active during teaching practice. They may exert some influence on their supervisors. The participants give meaning to their experiences and actions. These interpretations may be different from the official goals.
- (4) The social interactions that occur during teaching practice are flexible. Student teachers could shift entirely to the prevailing ethos of their practice schools.

It has been observed that socialization is a complex, multi-dimensional process. This implies that teaching practice should be seen as a complex, multi-dimensional process. Attention should be paid to the process not only the "finished product."

PROCEDURE

This study is concerned with identifying the nature (quality) of the interaction between class teachers and the student teachers assigned to their classes. In order to unearth the quality of such interactions, a multi-dimensional research approach was adopted. This was called "Describing Dynamic Events" (Tabachnick, 1976, 1978, 1980; Ekpunobi, 1980)

In describing dynamic events in student teaching, participant observation, interviews and questionnaires were used. The researcher studied one Teacher Training College (TTC) in Anambra State, Nigeria, in detail. He participated in all the College activities and followed the students to their practice schools. The interactions of four elementary school teachers and eight students who taught in their classes were closely observed. The students' formal and informal interactions with these teachers were carefully documented.

Sets of questionnaire for class teachers, College tutors and student teachers were constructed using data generated from "emerging categories" in the participant observation. The questionnaires sought to confirm the generalizability

or otherwise, of some observed phenomena. The validity and reliability of each questionnaire was established before it was administered.

The sets of questionnaire were given to a stratified random sample of 2 male and 2 female TTCs in Anambra State. This was made up of 300 class teachers, 120 College tutors and 340 student teachers. The returned and useable copies of the questionnaires were analyzed using the percentage. The findings are presented in Tables.

FINDINGS

The qualitative observation notes reveal the following categories of cooperating teachers' role in socializing student teachers. We have categorized the cooperating teachers' role into "Instructional" and "Management" roles.

<u>INSTRUCTIONAL ROLE</u>	<u>MODE OF TRANSACTION</u>
(1) Observe students	(1) Sporadic, without much attention.
(2) Correct Students' spelling mistakes.	(2) Send note to student while he is teaching. Send student's partner to whisper the correction. Raise hand to catch student's attention, then point at the mistake.
(3) Correct the wrong facts students teach.	(3) Call student to the rear of the classroom to discuss the wrong fact. Help student to map out strategy for correction.
(4) Correct instructional strategies	(4) Take over class from student and demonstrate appropriate strategy. Discuss with student after the lesson.

(5) Help students to understand the pupils.

(6) Provide general feedback.

(5) Discuss specific pupil's behaviour with student. Advise student on how to handle pupils.

(6) This depends on the class teacher's whim and mood. There is no schedule, no prepared agenda, no location. Sometimes teachers say words of encouragement to student teachers.

MANAGEMENT ROLE

(1) Help to maintain discipline

(2) Mark register, fill diary

(3) Make pupils do routine duties

MODE OF TRANSACTION

(1) Class teachers instruct their pupils on how to behave during teaching practice. They use cane to keep the pupils quiet. Student teachers are not allowed to use cane. The class teacher's presence helps to keep the class under control.

(2) Class teachers do not allow students to handle the records. They tell student teachers that records should be carefully and neatly kept.

(3) Class teachers tell their pupils to do their routine duties like fetching water and sweeping the classroom.

The responses of the College Tutors, Class Teachers and Student Teachers to the sets of questionnaire are presented in the following Tables.

TABLE 1
CLASS TEACHERS OBSERVE STUDENT TEACHERS WHEN THEY ARE
TEACHING

	Always	Sometimes	Never	Total
Teachers	270 (91.84)	18 (6.12)	6 (2.04)	294 (100%)
Tutors	18 (15)	60 (75)	12 (10)	120 (100%)
Students	54 (17.8)	250 (82)	0 (0)	304 (100%)
Total	342 (47.6)	358 (49.9)	18 (2.5)	718 (100%)

Class teachers observe student teachers' lessons most of the time.

TABLE 2
CLASS TEACHERS ENCOURAGE STUDENT TEACHERS TO USE NEW AND
DIFFERENT TEACHING METHODS.

	Always	Sometimes	Never	Total
Teachers	114 (39.58)	126 (43.75)	48 (16.67)	288 (100%)
Tutors	6 (5)	60 (50)	54 (45)	120 (100%)
Students	0 (0)	334 (98.24)	6 (1.76)	340 (100%)
Total	120 (16)	520 (69.5)	108 (14.4)	748 (100)

Sometimes class teachers encourage student teachers to use new and different teaching methods.

TABLE 3
CLASS TEACHERS PREPARE INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS FOR
THEIR STUDENT TEACHERS

	Always	Sometimes	Never	Total
Teachers	12 (4.17)	78 (27)	198 (68.75)	288 (100%)
Tutors	0 (0)	12 (10)	108 (90)	120 (100%)
Students	0 (0)	0 (0)	298 (100)	298 (100%)
Total	12 (1.7)	90 (12.7)	604 (85.5)	706 (100%)

Most of the class teachers do not prepare instructional materials for their student teachers.

TABLE 4
CLASS TEACHERS HELP STUDENT TEACHERS TO STATE THE ENTRY
BEHAVIOURS AND SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES FOR THEIR LESSONS

	Always	Sometimes	Never	Total
Teachers	84 (28.57)	108 (36.73)	102 (34.89)	294 (100%)
Tutors	6 (5)	42 (35)	72 (60)	120 (100%)
Students	0 (0)	0 (0)	340 (100)	340 (100%)
Total	90 (11.9)	150 (20)	514 (68)	754 (100%)

While most of the class teachers say that they help student teachers to state their entry behaviours and specific objectives, all of the students say that they have never

received such help from their class teachers.

TABLE 5
CLASS TEACHERS SUGGEST THE MOST APPROPRIATE INSTRUCTIONAL
TECHNIQUE FOR A LESSON

	Always	Sometimes	Never	Total
Teachers	72 (24.49)	156 (53.06)	66 (22.45)	294 (100%)
Tutors	0 (0)	54 (45)	66 (55)	120 (100%)
Students	0 (0)	0 (0)	298 (100)	298 (100%)
Total	72 (10)	210 (29)	430 (60)	712 (100%)

All the student teachers say that their class teachers did not suggest the most appropriate instructional techniques to them.

TABLE 6
CLASS TEACHERS TELL THEIR PUPILS TO DO THEIR ROUTINE DUTIES

	Always	Sometimes	Never	Total
Teachers	220 (75.6)	60 (20.4)	0 (0)	294 (100%)
Tutors	66 (55)	54 (45)	0 (0)	120 (100%)
Students	10 (2)	270 (79)	60 (18)	340 (100%)
Total	304 (40.5)	384 (51)	60 (8)	750 (100%)

Most of the class teachers instruct their pupils to do their routine duties like fetching water and sweeping the classroom.

DISCUSSION

Many Nigerian educators and researchers tend to amplify the negative roles of cooperating teachers. Some of these researchers would prefer that the teaching practice period be extended by an extra year than for the permanent teachers to conterminate student teachers with their outdated methods of teaching. They will prefer College tutors to do all the supervision (Nnadozie, 1983).

Socialization is used in this study to describe how students learn to teach. Its preference to other conceptual descriptions is based on the fact that it embraces the transmission of attitudes, interest, values, skills and knowledge. The view of socialization accepted for this study lends insight into the active participation of socializees in the process. This means that students, though bombarded by these values exercise some autonomy in choosing what to internalize. The choice could be conscious or unconscious. For instance, how teachers mark their registers and maintain other class schedules may have as much influence on a student's professional preparation as a direct correction in spelling.

All the student teachers interviewed said that they expected more help from the class teachers than they received. They received more help from the tutors than from the class teachers. They made reference to their lesson notes which the tutors marked. To them, the notes were crucial

to effective teaching. Table 4 shows that many of the teachers claim to have helped the students in parts of their lesson notes. Unfortunately no student acknowledged such a help. The same trend is also observed in Tables 3 and 5.

Observing students' lessons is an activity that is essential to carrying out the cooperating teachers' supervisory role. Students expected class teachers to observe their lessons but there was no established format for teachers to observe students. Teachers came into their classrooms and went out as many times as they liked. They did not observe entire lessons. While in the classrooms teachers did other things as the students taught. Two or more teachers could sit in a class and share jokes as a student taught. Those who brought their children to school played with them or supervised their play with other children. Those who brought novels to school sat behind or in front, on the teachers chair, and read while the students taught. There is no doubt that the quality of supervision given by the majority of class teachers who claimed that they always observed the students as they taught (91.84%) was poor - Table 1.

Class teachers do more things in socializing students into teaching than we are willing to concede to them. We may not recognise them as official participants in the evaluation of student teaching but they exert influence in the evaluation of student teaching. Class teachers

identify "good lessons" and congratulate the students who taught the lessons. They say words like, "that was a good lesson... congrats ... you did well," to the students. Such evaluative words are selectively drawn from the bank of their preconceptions about effective teaching. These evaluative words reinforce students' teaching behaviours.

It has been found that we tend to identify with people that reinforce us. The concept of identification presupposes some forms of modeling. It should be remembered that identification and imitation may be purposeful or not. The mere presence of class teachers during student teaching is a factor that should not be under-rated. Some of the apparently dormant behaviours may have long term effects. For instance, student teachers are not allowed to administer corporal punishment. They wade through the agony of controlling the class without canes. Meanwhile, what seems to be happening is "anticipatory socialization," by which is meant the learning of an incumbent of how to engage in the alter's activities long before he comes to participate in the activities. Students acquire these techniques of discipline and may use them when they graduate from College.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is obvious from this study that cooperating teachers are not incorporated in the official plan of student teaching. Their ideas and evaluation of students' performance are not solicited. In spite of all these, they assist the

student teachers in many ways. It may then be recommended that their roles be recognized by the Colleges.

Cooperating teachers, who themselves must be trained teachers, should be given more responsibilities of the supervision of student teachers. The introduction of "supervisory team" may help to eliminate the administrative problems of involving the cooperating teachers. The supervisory team consists of ^{many} class teachers, serving in the supervisory role, and 2 or 3 student teachers. The College tutor, in consultant capacity, works directly with the cooperating teacher, not the student. Direct supervision is shifted to the class teacher who is on the spot, knows each pupil taught, and understands the physical and social environments.

Tutors and class teachers should be trained on how to supervise within the supervisory team. Experience tells us that supervision demands as much training as other professions. It is one thing to be a teacher/tutor and quite another to be an effective instructional supervisor.

The supervisory team could be a way of maintaining academic standards. The interaction could help the class teacher to remain fresh in knowledge, skills and attitudes.

Future researchers may want to find out whether there will be any significant difference in the performance of students supervised by supervisory teams and those supervised by either the college supervisor alone or the class

teacher alone.

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